IX. SYSTEM OVERVIEW & NEXT STEPS

As population continues to grow in the Puget Sound region, congestion and air quality will remain top concerns. Programs which make it easier or more convenient for people to choose transit over single occupancy vehicles will play an important part in this region's ability to comply with state and federal standards and retain its high quality of living. At the same time, existing land use patterns and commuting preferences must be recognized. Techniques to improve regional mobility and encourage modal shifts are an integral part of the long-range transportation planning process.

This study is intended to support and dovetail with local and regional land use and mobility planning decisions enacted over the next 30 years. Since all demand estimates were produced under an unconstrained methodology, its recommendations can be seen as "maximum" or optimistic scenarios. Flexibility has been incorporated into the programming, with a range of forecasts, time periods, and facility size recommendations. Suggested projects should be considered as order-of-magnitude recommendations within a transit corridor.

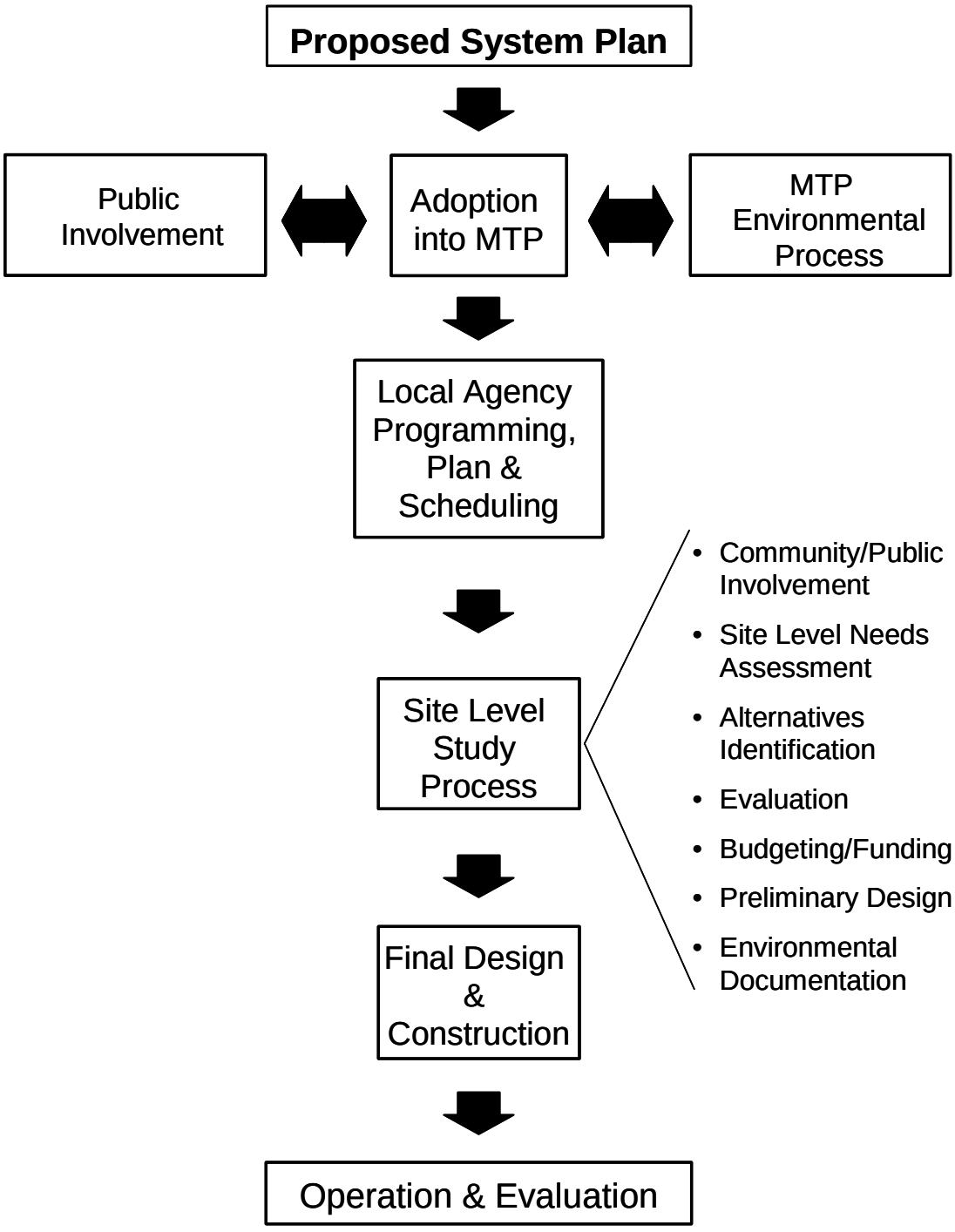

KING COUNTY PHOTO
BY NED AHRENS

In October 2000, the programming recommendations and cost estimates presented in this report were submitted by WSDOT, with the concurrence of local and regional transit to the PSRC for inclusion into the MTP. Once this system-wide program of park-and-ride expansion is adopted into both the MTP and WTP, the next step toward implementation will be for local agencies to identify funding for individual projects. This region has been subject to a widely varying political and legislative climate vis-à-vis support of, and funding for, transportation projects. Funding for the recommended facility investments is not guaranteed. As these investment recommendations are further evaluated, funding commitments from appropriate local and regional agencies will be required before implementation.

Most of the short-term projects have already been programmed by local transit agencies. Implementation of projects beyond those currently programmed will require careful analysis of ridership trends, transit service, funding climate, and political feasibility. Meeting local park-and-ride demand may include surface or structural expansion of existing sites, surface or structured new construction, or phased construction. Optimal placement within a transit corridor will involve a site-level study process including alternatives identification, preliminary design/environmental review, public involvement, and funding support. A flow chart illustrating this process in presented in Figure 9.1.

Other transportation capital improvements can greatly enhance and support both transit and park-and-ride effectiveness. Projects such as HOV lanes, direct access ramps, and ramp

Figure 9.1
Implementation Flow Chart



metering can greatly improve transit speed, reliability, safety, and public appeal. The Sound Transit/WSDOT South Everett Access Project is an example of a current project which combines a new park-and-ride lot along with direct access ramps to I-5 in the vicinity of 112th Street SW. These types of complimentary transportation projects can present partnering opportunities along with greatly enhanced effectiveness of the new lot. Consideration of adjacent planned or programmed HOV lanes and direct access ramps should be a prime site location consideration at time of implementation.

NEXT STEPS

It is recommended that this study be updated as a coordinated joint effort approximately every five to ten years or so in order to maintain its usefulness as a current planning tool. Implementation policies enacted by local agencies may generate demands and impacts on the transportation system not taken into account in the current analysis.

The inclusion of the study's programming recommendations in the MTP and WTP update processes is an important first step in programming projects for the regional park-and-ride lot system. It is recommended that the collaborative process used to develop this update be continued in later programming efforts to help ensure that the implementation of the study's recommendations meet regional park-and-ride needs.